This is an excellent prescription. It would, in my judgment, have a better chance of adoption if the authors had been as rigorous in attempting to determine the sources of the rekindled management animosity to unionism as they were in documenting its existence. They blame it almost entirely on the sharp jump in the wage advantage union workers gained over nonunion workers in the second half of the 1970s, before the era of givebacks began. The differential for union workers rose to 30 per cent in the last five years of that inflationary decade, as against a 19 per cent differential in the 10 years from 1965-75. Union members did much better than the rest of the work force in keeping up with rising living costs—and this was no less the case for those who did not have escalator clauses in their contracts than for those with automatic pay boosters.

I find this much too elementary an explanation. If anything, the anti-union aggressiveness of many elements in industry has grown in the last two or three years of sharp subsidence in the rate of union wage improvement. The sluggishness of labor's own organizing efforts and the draining of its old missionary spirit is, of course, one factor in the conviction of many employers that unions are ripe for the taking. For many years labor leaders have put excessive reliance on employers to do their organizing for them through union shop contracts and other phases of pushbutton unionism.

I agree that changes in the labor law are necessary. But I think the best hope for a turnaround that would contain within it the seeds of union growth and an expanding economy lies in an expansion of the movement already well under way in some of the country's key industries. Through management-labor cooperation, this aims to advance the quality of worklife by giving workers a bigger say in problem-solving and gainsharing in the factory or office. Up to now most unions have dragged their heels on such steps toward more employee participation, leaving to management an initiative that has always seemed to me at the very heart of what unionism is all about.

The New Case for Israel

From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict Over Palestine

By Joan Peters
Harper and Row.
601 pp. $24.95.

Reviewed by
Martin Kramer
Department of Middle Eastern History, Tel Aviv University; visiting professor, Cornell

SOME DAY, an intrepid scholar will set out to write a thorough history of Arab-Zionist polemics—of the moral arguments and claims made and discarded in pursuit of uncommitted minds. He or she will relate how the debate began over British promises, and rested upon the fine interpretation of diplomatic correspondence; how, in the 1940s, both sides came to rely heavily upon emotional responses to the misery of homeless refugees; and how, as the dislocated built new lives, and even the most unlikely peoples gained independence, Palestinian Arab polemicists turned to speaking of "inalienable national rights."

In that future history, *From Time Immemorial* may well warrant a chapter unto itself. For this massive tome, despite serious weaknesses, has shifted the case for Israel to new ground.

The old Zionist arguments, writes Joan Peters, have been eroded by "nagging doubts." With the terror and guilt of the Holocaust receding, many of Israel's supporters—indeed, many Israelis—"bear an oft-unnamed fear that their own championing of the Jewish State may have imposed an unfair burden upon the Palestinians." Hands are wrung. "What once seemed clear-cut and indisputable becomes uncomfortably vague and confusing." As a result, those who cannot abide moral ambiguity, at least in politics, are today much more responsive to the Arab appeals for redress of Palestinian political grievances.

Peters says she has now uncovered some "staggering" truths about Arab population movements that "alter the very basis of our understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict and destroy the foundation upon which the 'Palestinian' claims have rested." Through demographic data, she seeks to establish that the coastal and central plains of Palestine, where most Jews settled before 1948, were thinly inhabited by Arabs in the late 19th century. It was the economic opportunities created by Jewish settlement that prompted a "massive" Arab influx, consisting of in-migration from the hilly regions (including Transjordan) that were the traditional Arab population centers in Palestine, and illegal immigration from neighboring countries. Thus the bulk of the 1948 refugees were hardly inhabitants "from time immemorial" in what became Israel; they were newcomers to most of the places they fled during the War of Independence. Peters would have us call them "returnees," not refugees.

In support of this argument, the author overwhelms us with a barrage of anecdotes, diplomatic reports and village studies mentioning Arab migration. Among them are accounts of Syrians swarming across Palestine's borders searching for work, and of villages in the coastal plain that were Egyptian in speech and dress. The critical issue here, however, is not the existence of Arab immigration and in-migration; both occurred often enough to warrant frequent acknowledgment in contemporary sources. We really need to know exactly how many Arabs moved in. And since neither the Ottomans nor the British attempted to count them, Peters—who charges the British with a conspiracy of negligence—is forced to rely on statistical extrapolations and projections.

That is the essence of *From Time Immemorial*. Peters makes a few dozen other polemical points, lest any single line of her case meet with resistance. Regrettably, these are based on little be-

yond the author's rummaging through archives and far more balanced historical studies than her own for whatever evidence she can find to back up her thesis. By selectively sifting this material, she portrays Jewish life in Arab lands and in Ottoman Palestine as a long night of terror, thereby giving the lie to the Arab contention that both peoples lived in peace before the advent of political Zionism. But sometimes the empirical pickings are slim, and "one can only speculate unhappily about those acts of violence that went *unreported* by a predominantly intimidated Jewish society that had been long terrorized into silence." So much for historical method.

Peters disdains even careful Jewish historians who, with nuanced interpretations, have tried to account for the full range of Jewish experience in Arab lands. In attempting to explain more than the periodic persecutions, she tells us, they have "demonstrated an inability to fathom or, perhaps, to accept the implications of the history they themselves have uncovered." The "ambivalent historians" are chastised for writing for "one or two or a dozen experts" capable of seeing the gray, and not for the "vast majority of readers, using the work for superficial reference or information." So much for historians. Her treatment of the Algerian-born historian of North African Jewry, André Chouraqui, is appalling.

This arrogant style admits no understatement, and it ruins arguments that would be utterly irrefutable were they presented with a higher regard for factual precision. Example: The record of Arab collaboration with the Axis is damning enough without Peters' astonishing assertion that the Mufti of Jerusalem "was personally responsible for the concentration camp slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Jews, if not more." Why, in that event, did Israel fail to punish him, and instead allow him to circulate for another 30 years until old age claimed him—not under an assumed name in South America, but in Beirut, where he lived as a celebrity? Peters is simply wrong. The Mufti was a political collaborator and ideological ally of Nazi Germany; but he was not what she calls a "coordinator" of the Final Solution. In one stroke of exaggeration, Peters has completely obfuscated the meaning of responsibility for the Holocaust.

Oddly, too, her indictment of Britain's Palestine policy is out of step with current Israeli scholarship, which is more inclined to regard Britain's role in the creation of a Jewish homeland as indispensable. In a word, indignation has gotten the better of her, and has left this polemic vulnerable on points of fact and interpretation.

This is especially unfortunate because on the central point of her book, the demographic argument, Peters is probably right. She compares late Ottoman population records with subsequent censuses of Palestine conducted by the British, and very convincingly maintains that the remarkable growth of Arab population in areas of Jewish settlement cannot be explained merely by natural increase. In locating the solution in Arab migration, the author has demonstrated resourceful ingenuity.

That is not to say her case is unassailable. True, Ottoman records show that the plains of Palestine were sparsely inhabited less than a century ago. But Peters does not use statistical methods now employed by historians of Ottoman demography to compensate for the usual Ottoman undercounting of certain subpopulations, such as women, children and nomads. Until these methods are applied, we cannot know whether the undercount in these parts of Palestine was significant or negligible. Peters also omits important explanations of how she resolved problems of comparison between Ottoman and British statistics, which were collected and organized very differently.

Peters, then, has not dispelled all "nagging doubts." Still, *From Time Immemorial* raises overdue questions about the demographic history of Palestine in a way that cannot be ignored.

THE RIDDLE OF THE SMITH: #1

Why Is the Literary Establishment So Afraid of This Book?

A MODERN DUNCIAD
by Richard Nason

"Silence was the only possible tactic. . . . The New York poets and their supporters weren't accustomed to such a beating. Adulation is what they knew—and perhaps occasional genteel criticism. But not this kind of headlong attack aimed at the literary jugular. . . ."

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This is the book's true triumph. Peters has delivered a well-placed shot into the Palestinian Arab court, and has posed an exciting challenge to serious historians of population. If they fail to reply with the same vigor, applause for this book will be very much in order.

A Clanging Alarm Bell

The Power to Lead: The Crisis of the American Presidency

By James MacGregor Burns
Simon & Schuster.
288 pp. $16.95.

Reviewed by
Henry F. Graff
Professor of History, Columbia; editor, "The Presidents: A Reference History"

THE CONSTITUTION and the Declaration of Independence, Herbert Hoover once declared, are "the twin tablets of the law." If indeed the substance of that metaphor is embossed on the national mind—and it is easy to suspect that it is—then the trenchant arguments offered by James MacGregor Burns in his new book face tough going. Burns makes a case for a fresh design of government—based chiefly on a revivification of political parties—that he believes ought to attend the commemoration of the Constitution's 200th anniversary. But he is too adept a political scientist to think that short of a national crisis—or worse, a national disaster—the large-scale reordering of the American government he proposes is likely to occur.

As a President-watcher I am constantly being pestered to answer why the United States does not have a single six-year term for Presidents, and whether I don't believe that a parliamentary system would be more effective than our own in bringing dynamic leaders to the fore. Since there is no way of comparing a single-, fixed-term President with those who seek re-election (only James K. Polk announced in advance of taking office that he would not serve a second term), and no way to compare Presidents and Prime Ministers, I am always at a loss to respond without feeling the urge to give a lecture. The next time these questions are put to me I will recommend Burns' book as required reading for my tormentors. He is a political scientist steeped in American history and he provides solid authority all neatly set forth with pertinent detail.

The crisis besetting the Presidency, as Burns sees it, is that politicians joust for the White House as if playing the boy's game of "King of the Rock." By this he means that they package themselves through the use of media experts, an army of doorbell ringers, and millions of dollars raised "scientifically," and carry on as if they were heading a holy crusade to eradicate some dread disease. Thus organized and arrayed, the chief campaigners—hardly to be called leaders because the effect of their effort, argues Burns, is to deny the country true leadership—establish themselves as the center of interest and attention to the detriment of party operation and requirements. For the self-appointed hopefuls muddy the issues, and ignore their fellow-candidates and party confreres in office, apparently oblivious to the fact that the victor in the tournament must eventually concert his efforts and goals with those of other people in order to govern.

The constant reach for the Presidential office "next time around," furthermore, means that the nation is endlessly electing a new "King of the Rock," and the Presidency is accordingly being increasingly personalized and paralyzed. On top of everything, the decline of party loyalty and discipline in the presence of the separation of powers and the Federal arrangement ordained by the Constitution have had the effect, Burns believes, of so severely hobbling America's ability to govern itself effectively that it may be the worst-managed of the great Western countries.

On the eve of the 1984 campaign Burns' assessment is as sobering as it is distressing. He has thought through how he would modernize the Constitution, resuscitate political parties, reinvigorate Congress, and make the Presidency once more the sheet anchor of the republic. Readers will find his proposals fascinating, even if all of his ideas are not entirely novel. Instinctively, though, the thought of tampering with the Constitution—for that is how most Americans would probably label the idea of altering one of the "tablets of the law"—in front of television cameras no less, boggles the mind. (Burns warns grimly that since he is convinced a renovation of the national government must eventually come, like it or not, the nation is well-advised to undertake the task before a hideous emergency makes it unavoidable.) Still, it is worth pondering that the history of republics contains sufficient evidence to more than hint that our kind of government could come a cropper as every republic of the past eventually did. Burns' words in the light of such awareness become a clanging alarm bell.

Although Burns devotes a few pages to the role of television in political affairs, he does not directly address the truth that 40 years into the age of the tube, our political institutions have not yet been able to accommodate themselves comfortably to the invention. The "electronic mirror," as the television set was once blithely tagged, has proved to be nothing of the sort: It is an indispensable element in the electoral process, inseparably intertwined with the traditional and older elements. The hyped presentation of the candidates on the screen now replaces the ancient hoopla formerly embodied in torchlight processions and partisan parades along Main Street. In addition, television has drained the electoral process of the mystery and the possibility of sleight-of-hand maneuver unmistakably necessary to its proper functioning. Television, in a word, has made the system more "democratic" but less "republican."

The evidence from the present primary campaign is that the crowds which once gathered to see Presidential aspirants in person have disappeared. Either